

Listing of Claims:

1 – 22 (cancelled)

23. (new) A canister or upright vacuum cleaner comprising:

- a) a vacuum cleaner head having a dirty air inlet;
- b) a first cyclonic stage in fluid flow communication with the dirty air inlet and with a source of suction, the first cyclonic stage having at least one upstream cyclone which has an associated upstream particle collector;
- c) a second cyclonic cleaning stage comprising a plurality of downstream cyclones in parallel which have an associated downstream particle collector, each downstream cyclone having an air exit; and,
- d) a filter positioned downstream from the second cyclonic cleaning stage and in fluid flow communication with each downstream cyclone air exit.

24. (new) The canister or upright vacuum cleaner of claim 23 wherein the downstream cyclone air exits extend to a manifold and the manifold has an air exit which is in fluid flow communication with the filter.

25. (new) The canister or upright vacuum cleaner of claim 24 wherein the filter is a HEPA filter.

26. (new) The canister or upright vacuum cleaner of claim 23 wherein the first cyclonic stage has an air exit and the second cyclonic cleaning stage has an air inlet and the vacuum cleaner further comprises a passage extending from the first cyclonic stage air exit to the second cyclonic stage air inlet.

27. (new) The canister or upright vacuum cleaner of claim 26 wherein the passage narrows in the downstream direction.

28. (new) The canister or upright vacuum cleaner of claim 26 wherein the passage

narrows from the first cyclonic stage air exit to the second cyclonic stage air inlet.

29. (new) The canister or upright vacuum cleaner of claim 26 wherein a filter is not positioned in the passage.
30. (new) The canister or upright vacuum cleaner of claim 26 wherein the passage is configured to inhibit particulate matter from settling out in the passage.
31. (new) The canister or upright vacuum cleaner of claim 23 further comprising a single dirt collection chamber for the second cyclonic stage.
32. (new) The canister or upright vacuum cleaner of claim 23 wherein the first cyclonic cleaning stage comprises a single cyclone.
33. (new) A canister or upright vacuum cleaner comprising:
  - a) a vacuum cleaner head having a dirty air inlet;
  - b) a first cyclonic stage in fluid flow communication with the dirty air inlet and with a source of suction, the first cyclonic stage having at least one upstream cyclone which has an associated upstream particle collector and an air exit;
  - c) a second cyclonic cleaning stage comprising an air inlet and a plurality of downstream cyclones in parallel which have an associated downstream particle collector, the downstream cyclones each having an air exit; and,
  - d) a passage extending from the first cyclonic stage air exit to the second cyclonic stage air inlet wherein a filter is not positioned in the passage.
34. (new) The canister or upright vacuum cleaner of claim 33 wherein the passage narrows in the downstream direction.
35. (new) The canister or upright vacuum cleaner of claim 33 wherein the passage narrows from the first cyclonic stage air exit to the second cyclonic stage air inlet.

36. (new) The canister or upright vacuum cleaner of claim 33 further comprising a filter positioned downstream from the second cyclonic cleaning stage and in fluid flow communication with each downstream cyclone air exit.
37. (new) The canister or upright vacuum cleaner of claim 36 wherein the downstream cyclone air exits extend to a manifold and the manifold has an air exit which is in fluid flow communication with the filter.
38. (new) The canister or upright vacuum cleaner of claim 33 further comprising a single dirt collection chamber for the second cyclonic stage.
39. (new) The canister or upright vacuum cleaner of claim 33 wherein the first cyclonic cleaning stage comprises a single cyclone.